

THE CHANGING SCENE

127 In some respects the factors of social change operating at these two stages and the resultant trends are complementary, while in others they stand out in marked contrast. It will be useful first to analyse the changes that came about in the life and ways of the people in the last fifty years of the feudal period, and then to follow it up by an examination of some of the more recent changes brought about by the Police Action.

It is difficult to present a systematic account of the different stages of the slow and gradual transition of the village from its pre- and early-Jagir days to the conditions that it presented in the later part of the feudal period. Any attempt to do so would necessitate placing excessive reliance on oral tradition about the near past. In order to be able to compare the conditions in the two periods and to determine the main lines of variation, reconstruction of a picture of the first stage is necessary. This could be done on the basis of:

(a) Factual information regarding comparable, but remote villages of the region, which because of their comparative isolation and lack of urban contacts present to-day, in a broad sense, conditions that Shamirpet would have presented in the pre- and early-Jagir period. Cautious and limited use of this method of translating space into time is useful in providing us with a starting point.

(b) Oral traditions and memories of the people, in so far as they do not concern themes pertaining to family glory and personal pride, or those involving subjective idealization.

(c) Fragmentary evidence from documentary and historical sources reflecting conditions of life and living in that period. Police, revenue and other semi-legal records obtainable have been used in this connection.

The contrasting picture of the village representing the last phase of the feudal period can be drawn from actual ethnographic observation and record.

178
369 The major factors which influenced the course of developments in the village have been mentioned earlier. However, they need some further elaboration. In the pre- and early-Jagir period the contacts between the village people and State administration were on a very limited scale, and were confined mostly to payment of land revenue and settlement of land disputes. Occasionally, criminal offences and civil suits of a serious nature were tried in